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OCI No. 1570/63

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
19 June 1963

## CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Portugese Opposition

1. Civilian opposition to the Salazar regime, except for the Communists, is splintered, poorly organized and without effective leadership. For the most part, it is drawn from an assortment of left-of-center elements. These groups, all of them penetrated to some extent by the Communists, have mounted two abortive attempts to overthrow the government in the recent past (once in March 1959 and again in January 1962). They continue to plot for another try, but given the present apathy of most of the Portugese public and the watchfulness of the security forces, their chances of succeeding in the foreseeable future are poorer than they were after the 1958 presidential election. At that time there was deep-seated unrest ready to explode at any moment, and the police proved rather inept in carrying out counteraction.

2. There is some disaffection within the armed forces, but not enough to cause the regime to be concerned at present about a military coup. Such a development, however, would become a distinct possibility if Angola or Mozambique were to be lost. As long as the present regime can hang on to the African provinces, its chances of survival are fairly good.

3. The threat of the Portugese Communist Party (PCP), which claims 8-10,000 members, hovers in the background. Its aim is to achieve legal status after the Salazar regime falls through a deal with the rest of the opposition. For the present, it is stressing the need for establishing a united front of all anti-government groups rather than revolution. A measure of the Communists' success is the growing feeling

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in many sectors of the non-Communist opposition that a link up with the Communists is necessary if Salazar is ever to be overthrown. The Communists have not so far, however, had much impact on the mass of the Portugese people.

4. For several years there has been extensive revolutionary plotting on the part of Portugese (and Spanish) exiles. Chief among these is Humberto Delgado, a presidential candidate in 1958. Exile activity reportedly is centered in Rome where the Portugese and Spanish movements are joined under a Supreme Council of Iberian Liberation. This organization coordinates the activities of the various exile groups which the Communists have been able to penetrate as well as those of the so-called New Opposition. The New Opposition is a clandestine organization in Portugal itself which has not been infiltrated by the Communists.

5. Delgado's own organization, the National Front of Portugese Liberation which set up the Supreme Council, is also located in Rome. According to recent reports, it will be moving to Algiers. The Front's objectives are twofold: fomenting revolution in the homeland and pushing independence for Portugal's overseas provinces.

6. Delgado has indicated that the PCP has a rightful place in any opposition movement; in fact, the party is already represented in his organization at the policy-making level. At present, Delgado does not have much popular support in Portugal, in large measure because of his relations with the Communists. He has made several trips between Brazil, heretofore his headquarters, and North Africa, western Europe and the Communist bloc. One report has it that he recently met with Alvaro Cunhal, secretary general of the PCP in Prague. He is also said to be in touch with various Angolan nationalist leaders.

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